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THE LAND OF INCONGRUITIES.

SOMEWHERE, India has been called the 'Land of Incongruities;' and no term could better describe the curious state of things therein produced by the running side by side of Oriental stagnation and Western progress. We have a great country inhabited by millions, the vast bulk of whom are immovably rooted in their intense conservatism; who are trammelled by a network of caste laws and prejudices; and who cling with the obstinacy of ignorance or fanaticism to their old customs and traditions. Then, scattered thinly over this desert of bigoted superstition, we have little colonies of educated Englishmen, who may be considered to be on the whole of rather superior culture and intellect, as nearly all owe their present position to having passed a competitive examination of more or less severity. These latter, with their wives and daughters, have exhausted the resources of Europe to surround their Indian homes with every luxury that can help to make their exile more tolerable. They live everywhere in that free and pleasant social intercourse that is one of the greatest charms of Indian life; but their nineteenth-century civilisation for ever rubs shoulders with the prehistoric barbarism of the great nations round them, in which these little British stations are immersed like islets in the sea. There is no sharp line drawn between them; everywhere we find the two extremes touching and overlapping. The punkah that waves overhead in the most luxurious drawing-room furnished with every refinement of modern art, is pulled by an almost naked savage squatting in the veranda outside, a creature who neither knows who we are nor whence we come, but regards us as beings from another sphere, whom he might possibly worship, if he were capable of worshipping anything higher than his copper coins and his caste rules about eating.

Alongside of the big English shops we find the hovels of the 'bunniah,' who grind the grain they sell between two stones, and swindle their

helpless customers over a thimbleful of lentils. The bunniah may be a thousand times richer than the European shopkeeper behind the plate-glass windows next door; he may have a perfect silver-mine of rupees buried under the mud floor of his hut; but still he sits in filthy rags in a hole where he can barely turn round, cheating the wretched coolies over a farthing's worth of rice, as his ancestors did a thousand years ago. He has enough learning to cook his own accounts, or to calculate the interest on five rupees at a thousand per cent., and he sends his son to school until he can just do the same. Then the son takes his place beside his father in the shop, and squats there for the rest of his life, never stirring save for the purpose of collecting his money, or to arrange about selling up some unfortunate debtor; until, fifty years or so hence, he will be carried feet foremost to the burning-ghat, leaving the silver-mine under the floor somewhat larger than he found it, as the result of his long life of sordid meanness.

Many curious inconsistencies naturally spring from the presence of the three great and very distinct races now living together in India. First, there are the original inhabitants, the Hindus, with their great system of caste, and a religion that nowadays apparently consists entirely of caste rules and laws, referring principally to the matters of eating and drinking. Next come their Mohammedan conquerors, of a more haughty and warlike nature, and imbued with the spirit of a vicious and intolerant religion that permits no compromise between the forcible conversion and the extermination of the unbeliever. Finally, there are the English, masters of both, and the present rulers of the land.

The accident of a similarity in colour between the Hindu and the Mussulman, and the fact that the two races are so closely mingled and living side by side all over India, makes it very difficult for any one not dwelling in the country to realise the gulf that lies between them, or the bitter enmity that is kept latent only by a power stronger than either. The Hindu, usually the

most peaceful of men, and ready to live amicably with those who do not endanger the purity of their caste, burn under the recollection of the insults and oppression of their Moslem invaders, and with the dread of another similar fate should India unfortunately be at any time left to her own resources. The Mohammedans look with the most utter contempt on everybody who is not of their religion, and feel equal hatred and jealousy for Hindu and Englishman alike. They reject the opportunities—that the more pliant Hindus have been quick to take advantage of—afforded by our offering the means of education and subsequent employment to the natives of India; and prefer to dream sulkily of the days of their bygone glory, or of the bloody revenge they would execute, could the sword of Islam once more sweep across the land.

Wherever we English live in India, there the three races are found together. Our servants are drawn equally from both the native classes. Cooks and table-servants are invariably Mohammedans; while grooms, bearers, gardeners, and outdoor servants generally, are usually Hindus. Through this circumstance, perhaps, order in the household is better maintained, as each class, so ready to take advantage of and swindle the master themselves, keep a sharp eye on the sins of the other party. Mussulman and Hindu live side by side in the bazaars amicably enough to all appearances, except when some festival, with its processions and drums and noise, goads the opposite faction to madness like an Orange band among the Fenians. Heads are then broken, and blood is freely if harmlessly spilt, till the police, and sometimes even the military, hunt both sides impartially about the streets until they disappear.

As the races are intermingled, so are their religions. In the throng of the street the Mohammedan spreads his praying-cloth and prostrates himself towards Mecca almost in the shadow of the Hindu temple; and the sweet sound of English church bells mingles with the voice of the muezzin and the braying Hindu conch. At your own church gates may be seen the dirty little wayside Hindu shrines of mud, garnished with bits of red rag and garlands of marigolds, and black with the smoke of votive lamps; while, if you happen to live near any sacred city, you will be edified by the spectacle of hundreds of hideous fakirs, rivalling each other in the loathsomeness of their attire, and the ingenious unpleasantness of their self-imposed penances, walking, crawling, or rolling along the road, or prowling about your servants' quarters in search of alms.

In all his farming operations the native clings with the greatest obstinacy to the ways and customs of his forefathers. Travelling by rail over the hundreds of miles of fertile plain in the north of India during the spring harvest, past the wretched little clusters of mud hovels where

the agricultural population live, one may see everywhere among the fields the mud-plastered thrashing-floors on which the wheat is being trampled out of the ear by bullocks. On the great heaps of grain and chaff and broken straw lie the men watching the noisy children who keep the cattle on the move, and the women laboriously reaping the ears of wheat one by one with a small knife. Then, if there be any breeze, one sees the women standing on the top of a bullock cart or other elevation, with baskets poised gracefully over their heads, pouring down a stream of grain from which the chaff is blowing like a cloud of smoke. When the grain thus primitively thrashed and winnowed is transferred from the creaking, crawling bullock-wagons to the railway train, it bids farewell to the leisure of the Old World; the demon of steam takes possession of it; and hurrying from train to ship, from the sunny plains of India to the murky docks of England, it passes into the whirling machinery of the mills at home.

Under the walls of the great woollen mills at Cawnpore, whose huge many-windowed blocks are nowadays more suggestive of Manchester than of mutinies and massacres, there may be seen natives weaving cloth just as they did before Caesar conquered us skin-clad savages in Britain. Two sticks driven into the ground have the warp strung between them, while the woof is laboriously woven across the threads from a shuttle held in the hand. The yarn they use has been spun on the rudest imaginable spinning-wheel, or made by the help of distaff and spindle, the latter weighted with a stone ring similar to those found in Celtic barrows at home.

I remember a curious scene at Cawnpore some years ago. I was living on the banks of the Ganges, not a quarter of a mile from the notorious massacre ghāt where Nana Sahib's treachery overwhelmed the unfortunate captives he had deluded with the hope of release. From the edge of my compound on the river about a mile of the stream was visible, and on this stretch of water there were seldom less than a couple of deceased Hindus to be seen floating with the current, or stranded on a sandbank with half-a-dozen vultures tugging at them. Bones and skulls were scattered along the banks, and even carried into the garden by the vultures, where they had to be periodically collected by the gardener and returned to the sacred river. The next house was a regimental mess, so close that we had the full benefit of its band on guest-nights. One moonlit evening the band was playing when a violent thunder-storm came on. At one moment the river would be lit up by the sudden glare of lightning, at the next the cosy lights from the messhouse would shine out into the darkness. The band, as if by arrangement, played some weird overture, which mingled with and now and then was lost amid the thunder and the howling wind. In the short lulls, the moan of jackals and the cries of startled birds came over the water to join in the concert. The scene was incongruous enough. There was the mess-room, brilliant with lights, the table glittering with silver and flowers, and twenty Englishmen dining luxuriously on the very edge of the black storm-lashed waters of the sacred river that was bearing past its dead within a few yards of them.

Then the storm passed; the moon shone out from among the breaking clouds, and the refrain of a dreamy waltz changed the picture from one of fury into peace in a few moments. But the ominous black specks still broke the silvery surface of the water; and the name of England may be but a faded memory ere the old Ganges ceases to take its dead children to its bosom, as it used to do, perhaps, when the ice-cap of the glacial epoch lay thick on the British Isles.

A SOLDIER AND A GENTLEMAN.*

CHAPTER IX.—SIR WILLIAM'S FRANKNESS.

FERRERS was astir betimes. He drew up his blind, flung open his window, and took a great draught of the clear morning air. The sun shone gloriously, dissipating the vapours of the night and the sleepy fragrance of the flowers; a lark carolled overhead in the fresh gaiety of rejoicing; and Ferrers felt that it would be a delightful world if he only had a clear and easy conscience. When he had dressed, he went to find Debrett. He thought he might not yet be up, so he knocked at his door, and receiving no answer, he turned the handle and entered. Debrett was still asleep in bed. Ferrers shook him by the shoulder, and at once he was awake and alert, as became a soldier. 'Hallo!' said he, 'what's the matter?'

'You promised,' said Ferrers, 'to be up early.'

'What's the time?'

'A little after six.'

'What's the use,' grumbled Debrett, 'of getting up when there's nothing to do? There's nothing to shoot.'

'There's rabbits, I daresay,' said Ferrers.

'Rabbits!'

'Well, we can have a walk and a talk, and a look at the crops.'

'Look at the crops—and shoot rabbits!' exclaimed Debrett. 'There speaks the farmer! I wish you wouldn't, Ferrers.—Is the door closed?'

'Yes,' answered Ferrers. 'And I am a farmer—or at least a farmer's son, and not a lordly sportsman.'

'Oh, you feel like that again, old chap. All right. I'll get up and have a look at the crops with you.'

Ferrers went down into the garden and hung about until Debrett appeared, when they strode away beyond the bounds of the park—stretching their long legs in unison—and entered upon devious paths by coppice and corn-field.

'May Mr William Dawlish smoke a pipe in the country?' asked Ferrers.

'Certainly,' answered Debrett. 'Why not?'

'That's just what I thought: "Why not?"' said Ferrers. 'Still, I thought I'd like to know from an authority if it was the correct thing.'

'So you've made up your mind to go on with the game?'

'No; I have not, Debrett. I'm going to put the matter to Sir William as soon as possible.'

'Well,' said Debrett, 'remember what I said to you last night: before you throw it all up, be sure that the young lady will approve.'

'Yes,' said Ferrers. 'And I must have a word with her about another thing. I forgot to tell you last night that when she saw we could get no talk together in the drawing-room, she asked me on a slip of paper to meet her in the Picture Gallery.'

'She did—did she? Well?'

'I didn't meet her.'

'Why? How was that?'

'I couldn't find the Picture Gallery. I was in search of it, when I had to retreat before Aunt Dawlish into a dark room, where she—without knowing it—pursued me, and drove me out bareheaded into the garden.'

'Oh, that was it!' laughed Debrett. 'But how are you going to explain all that to Miss Dolly?'

'I don't know. I don't see how I can explain it without telling her the truth. And then I'm in this double fix: I ought to tell Sir William first that I must tell her, and that will make an explanation necessary to him of the necessity of telling her.'

'And so you would have to betray the lady's confidence? That won't do.'

'No; I see that won't do at all. But what will do?'

'Let things be as they are; and tell Miss Dolly that you could not keep the assignation because you had to flee before Aunt Dawlish. Then she'll laugh at a big soldier like you running away from Aunt Dawlish, and it'll be all right.'

'Yes; that might do. And then, I know, she'd look so charming, I'd want to take her in my arms.—No; I must first have my talk with Sir William: I can't go on like this.'

'What an obstinate fellow you are!' exclaimed Debrett.

'Debrett,' said Ferrers, and he stopped and laid his hand on his friend's shoulder, 'you don't understand me in this. I feel about it more, far more, than you think. I'm hit—hit very hard here. I could die for that girl!—and I'm deceiving her! My boy, you can only tell what the grinding feeling of that is like when you're really, right-down, in love. If I go on as I have been going, seeing her, sitting with her, and talking to her, I shall have to do something mean: I shall have to run away with her! That would be madness, you see, and I want to get out of it.'

Debrett looked on him, and saw that he must be grievously smitten; his hopes, his fears, and his desires were so extreme and contradictory.

'All right, my boy,' said Debrett quietly. 'I understand, and I sympathise; and I'll stand by you as your friend. Shall I break the matter to Sir William?'

'No; thank you, Debrett,' said Ferrers; 'I think I'd better go through with it myself.'

'The sooner the better, then. Shall we go

back? You may have a better chance of getting him alone before breakfast than after.'

So they returned towards the house. And the sun rose higher and hotter in the heavens, and the larks rose with a less joyous song to a less height, and returned to earth more quickly. They had got nearer Dawlish Place by only a field or two, when, on the margin of a coppice a little way off, they descried three men.

'There is Dawlish, I believe,' said Debrett; 'but who are the others? They can't be the bankers: Drew and Drumly don't stand so high as that, do they?'

'No,' answered Ferrers; 'they're not Drew and Drumly. Besides, Drumly's lame.'

That he said on seeing the two strangers part from Sir William and walk hurriedly off. They were both tall, but the one seemed powerfully built, and the other slimly and delicately. They moved away arm-in-arm; but it appeared to Ferrers that the stronger was hastening the steps of the weaker. They skirted the coppice and then disappeared round its end.

'I wonder who they are?' said Debrett. 'They don't look like farmers; they didn't behave like servants.—But here's Dawlish.'

The baronet appeared to have just discovered them. He lightly waved his hand, and sauntered to meet them.

'Been looking at your covers, Dawlish?' asked Debrett. 'How are the birds?'

'Oh, they seem in good condition.—But how is it you are out so early? I'd have thought that, coming in so late as you did, you'd have wanted to lie in bed in the morning.'

'I did want to lie in bed; but this man would have me out. He has got a bad liver or something.'

'He doesn't look like a man,' said Sir William, with one of his polite grins, 'that knows he has a liver.'

'Perhaps it's a bad conscience, then,' said Debrett. 'I know he has got something the matter with him.'

'Oh!' said Sir William, with a quick look of suspicion.

'And I want a word with you about it,' said Ferrers.

'With me?' exclaimed Sir William. 'But I'm neither a doctor nor a parson.'

'But it concerns you,' said Ferrers.

'Oh!—Well, say on.'

'Shall I leave you?' asked Debrett.

'If Sir William Dawlish doesn't mind,' said Ferrers, 'I'd prefer you to stay: you've known of this business since the beginning.'

'Stay by all means,' said Sir William, looking more keenly suspicious; while Ferrers paled somewhat, and was sensible of such an agitation beneath his waistcoat as he had experienced when he had first faced 'the jokers' Drew and Drumly.

'The fact is,' began Ferrers, 'I'm getting more and more uncomfortable in this business, and I want to put it to you whether you can't let me off my bargain.'

'That's awkward,' said Sir William. Then, with a sharp look: 'You seemed comfortable enough last night: what's the reason of the change?'

'I've been turning over things in my mind, and I find I can't go on.'

'But why? I think you owe me a reason—I do, Ferrers. Having gone so far, I think you should frankly explain to me why you can't go on to the end. What are you afraid of?'

'Well, then, frankly—I am as much afraid of myself as of anybody or anything.'

'What do you mean?' asked Sir William.

'Somehow or another, I've got to care more for Miss Dolly Dawlish than I ought to do.'

'You shouldn't have done that,' said Sir William with a snap.

'How could I help it? You slip into things of that sort before you know.'

'Oh! He, he!' laughed Sir William; and there was a quality of cynical derision in his laugh which irritated the other.

'It is very absurd in me, I know. But a man can't help his feelings, though he can help how he behaves. That's why I confess it to you, and ask you to let me go.'

'Have you told the young lady that you are in love with her?'

'Most certainly not. That would have been behaving improperly to her and to you. You don't seem to understand what I said.'

'Oh, quite. Well, so long as you say nothing about it, there's no harm done.'

'But, good heavens, Sir William! have I no feeling? If I go on seeing the young lady and talking to her, I may lose control of myself!'

'But you mustn't,' said Sir William with a grin.

'If you have controlled yourself so long, you can surely control yourself for a day or two longer; that's all I ask of you. I put it to you on the point of honour. I went into this business in full dependence on your good sense and cleverness; I have performed my part; is it fair in you to abandon yours? You see we stand or fall together in this. If you give up your part, the whole thing is burst up; and it will be more than a fiasco: it will be a disgrace both to you and to me.'

Ferrers pulled his moustache in silence.

'If you go away now,' said Sir William, 'how am I to explain your disappearance?'

'You will excuse my saying,' resumed Ferrers, 'that there is something else troubles me besides my own feelings. I may be wrong, but I have a suspicion that you are using me for a purpose I don't like being used for.'

'What do you mean?—Speak out.'

'Well, I don't like,' declared Ferrers, 'to be in the position of a sort of promised husband to Miss Dawlish.'

'Oh, that's what you don't like,' laughed Sir William. 'But what makes you think you are in that position?'

'Will you answer me truly, Sir William?' said Ferrers, in a tone which might be taken for demand or entreaty according to the temper of the listener. 'Is there a marriage arranged, or going to be arranged, between William Dawlish and Miss Dolly Dawlish?'

'Now you're asking questions,' said Sir William. 'You are contravening the compact I made with you as a good soldier to carry out instructions without demanding explanations.—I think, Debrett, that is something like the form of words I used?'

'It is, Dawlish,' answered Debrett.

Ferrers said nothing; but he tugged at his

moustache, and his look became more grim and obstinate. Sir William noted the look, and diplomatically set himself to mollify and disperse it.

'I'll not be hard on you, however,' he said. 'I'll admit that your guess is correct—in part, only in part. But—there is no possible William Dawlish but yourself. It is a sad—a humiliating—thing for a father to confess, and I must say I had hoped to avoid the confession that my son is to all intents and purposes non-existent; to the world and all its duties and affairs he is practically dead.'

That seemed so obviously sincere and heartfelt a confession, and tallied so well with what Ferrers had overheard at the outset of the business, that he accepted it without hesitation, and indeed felt rather sorry he had extorted it.

'There is,' continued Sir William, 'in the expectation of the trustees, you understand, the prospect of a match between Miss Dolly Dawlish and Mr William Dawlish.—Now you know. What then?'

'Then, Sir William,' answered Ferrers, 'I can't carry out my share of the plot: I can't go on deceiving the young lady.'

'Deceiving?' exclaimed Sir William. 'What would you say if the young lady were herself a party to the plot?'

'By Jove!' exclaimed Debrett.

'I don't believe it!' said Ferrers flatly: the mere suggestion contradicted his belief in the young lady's frankness.

'You are somewhat unreasonable,' said Sir William with a shrug; 'but a little temper is excusable in you at present. Now I'll be kind to you, and, just as one man to another, I'll explain the whole matter. I'm hard up, and have been for long; a mortgage will foreclose soon, and if it do, I'm ruined.—You perceive I am quite frank with you. All that my niece knows: I have told it her; and she is only too glad out of her prospective abundance to help her uncle.'

'She is a trump!' exclaimed Debrett.

'She is a Dawlish,' said Sir William, sententially. 'My brother left her his heir, with a certain reversion to me, you understand; but I cannot in my need touch the reversion, nor even raise money on it, and my niece can only touch her own money on the eve of her marriage. You understand that?'

'Perfectly,' said Debrett.

'But even then she cannot touch it unless her trustees, Drew and Drumly, approve of the match. Now they know that my brother wished that my son, if possible, should marry his daughter. Therefore, we have devised this marriage—this marriage which cannot come off, because when the time comes William Dawlish will be gone.'

Ferrers said nothing; but his thought was troubled by two points that gleamed upon him from Sir William's revelation: Dolly, then, knew he was not William Dawlish, and she was consciously playing, for her uncle's sake, a game with him. These points were so disheartening to him, simple and modest as he was, that he at once called himself a fool for his presumptuous beliefs and doubts, and resolved to have done with the business, escape, and forget all about it.

'Now I have frankly told you the state of things,' said Sir William, 'what do you say? It must at the longest be all over in a day or two, and you may judge for yourself whether or not Miss Dawlish is conscious of the state of things.'

'I'll go on then, and see it out,' said Ferrers quietly. He was not quite sure he was doing right in assenting; for he was bewildered as well as disheartened by the new and plausible view of things presented by Sir William, and, moreover, he heard in his ear the suggestion which Lord Debrett had made but a few minutes before: 'Try to make sure that the young lady would thank you for throwing it up.'

'Very well,' said Sir William, as if it did not much matter whether he did or not.

'That's all right,' said Debrett about five minutes after the matter had been thought concluded. 'I thought it would be.'

They were approaching the house—they had indeed crossed the park and were entering on the garden proper—when they saw the very two men from whom Sir William had parted by the coppice, hurriedly cross the end of the garden and disappear somewhere in the neighbourhood of the stables. Ferrers, having his attention so much occupied with other things, would have made but light note of it, had he not remarked the look of resentment, almost of fury, with which Sir William regarded them. That look fixed the incident in his memory. There was another thing smote him disagreeably ere they reached the hall door: an open vehicle drove up bearing luggage and two men, one of whom was probably Debrett's servant, while the other was certainly the servant of Mr Drumly—the black-muzzled Irish-American.

But all common disagreeable things were forgotten in the deep unaccountable misery he felt, when, on chancing to raise his eyes just when under the wall of the house and against the richest rose-bushes, he espied Dolly Dawlish looking down on him from an open casement. When she knew herself seen, she withdrew, and hid behind a flaunting curtain; but Ferrers still felt that her eyes were on him.

ANCIENT STEEL.

It was the deliberate opinion of the wisest of men that 'there is nothing new under the sun.' And indeed, in the study of the manifold developments of applied science in the present day, one is surprised to find how many of its elementary principles were known and acted upon in ancient times, and how that knowledge and appropriation have continuously supplied the foundation on which the superstructure of our vast and increasing attainment is built.

To a great extent this is the case with steel; and in taking as the subject of this paper, 'Ancient Steel,' we purpose to draw attention to that branch of its manufacture which dates from prehistoric times, and which, after its entrance into the sphere of authentic record, possesses an historical continuity down to the period at which we date the birth of modern steel, rather more than a quarter of a century ago, and which, so

far from being disused or non-existent at the present time, forms the groundwork of the main applications of the processes now in use.

Dr Percy is perhaps alone in his theory that in the precession of the prehistoric ages, the Iron Age preceded the Age of Bronze. Nor does the solution of this problem of precedence receive much assistance from that far-reaching book of the past, the relics of ancient Assyria and Chaldea—whose definitely fixed chronology goes farther back than that of any other nation of primitive antiquity; as the results of early metallurgical work are therein presented to us concurrently, both in allusions to various metals in the mythologies and literature of the first epochs of their national life, and also in the numerous articles of bronze and iron unearthed in the mounds, and found enclosed in sarcophagi. The existence alone of certain little iron instruments bearing cuneiform characters carries us back to perhaps more than 4000 B.C., as the earlier language, of which the cuneiform character was the written symbol, had had time to become almost obsolete by about 3000 B.C.

Of the conditions of metallurgical industry in ancient Egypt we infer more than we learn from written records. The gigantic architectural works, of all but prehistoric antiquity, which were the great glory of ancient Egypt, involved a considerable knowledge of more than the elementary principles of applied science, and the existence of tools of extreme efficiency. Now, recorded history in Egypt undoubtedly begins with Sosis (Seneferu), the king whom Manetho places at the head of the fourth dynasty, and whose monuments and inscriptions are the first of the series in which is written the history of ancient Egypt, and which carries us back to at least 2700 B.C. To his three immediate successors tradition ascribes the building of the great Pyramids; and in regard to these it is simply impossible that tools composed of any metal but extremely hardened iron (that is, steel) could have been effectually used in dealing with the granite and hard stone of which they are composed. Equally so is this the case with the obelisks of a later date, the earliest of which we learn was the work of the second king of the twelfth dynasty. The monarch whose works are made most widely known throughout the modern world by his inscribed monoliths—which have found a resting-place in capitals of Europe and America—was Thothmes III., also of the twelfth dynasty, the specimen of his work which we possess being the obelisk on the Thames Embankment. To the same period belongs the representation discovered by Wilkinson on the walls of one of the Theban tombs, depicting a forge and bellows, and various stages of the smelting process, together with an object which is probably a crucible. Pictures of knives, shears, &c., occur in representations of various deities and mythological facts, which of course belong to the earliest conceivable period of

the nation's history. Experts in the deciphering of the hieroglyphic inscriptions conclude from them that the Egyptians were familiar with the working of iron.

Metallurgical work in iron and steel among the Hindus is of such remote antiquity that its origin and early development cannot satisfactorily be traced; but the method of manufacture was practically identical with that which constitutes the main metallurgical industry of India at the present day, and which thus presents an almost unique phenomenon of uninterrupted continuity throughout many centuries—the Wootz-steel. This ancient Indian Wootz-steel, which is practically the result of fusing a mixture of malleable iron and carbon, is in its main outlines a crude and miniature anticipation of the modern Siemens process; as, similarly, points of identity are perceived between an ancient Japanese method and the great Bessemer process.

The Chinese, who, in very early ages, had attained to some degree of understanding in the elementary principles of science and their applications, possessed also a comparatively advanced amount of knowledge in the manufacture and use of steel. Of its origin among them we have no account; but it is quite conceivable that its discovery preceded that of the lodestone, which under the name of Tche-chy (directing-stone) was in use among them fully 2600 B.C. There is mention of steel in very ancient Chinese writings, and an account of the process of manufacture by one writer about 400 B.C.; and various descriptive allusions to it, implying a considerable amount of knowledge and power of discrimination in reference to its properties, occur at various subsequent periods down to the present day, when it is still a flourishing branch of their manufacture.

Inferentially, it is perfectly clear that the Phœnicians were acquainted with the use of extremely hardened iron (properly speaking, steel), as their numerous and beautiful works in ornamental metallurgy, and the cutting and engraving of precious stones, for which they were conspicuously eminent among the nations of antiquity, necessarily involve; as also do the inscriptions which exist in the Phœnician language. Phœnicia, as represented by its famous daughter-city of Tyre, was at the height of artistic celebrity in the time of David and Solomon (1050-1000 B.C.). With them, as powerful neighbouring monarchs, Hiram, the ambitious young king of Tyre, found it wise to enter into a friendly alliance, and concluded an arrangement which proved to be for the mutual advantage of both communities, in the numerous works of art and value, especially in metallurgy, executed by his trained artificers for the furnishing and enrichment of the Temple, Capital, and Palace at Jerusalem.

In the time of Homer, iron was well known, but was much less used than bronze, being costly, as we infer from the fact that he makes Achilles

offer it as a prize at the funeral of Patroclus. Three times in the *Iliad*, Homer speaks of iron as *polukmētos*, that is, a metal obtained with great labour. In the preface to Dr Schliemann's *Mycenæ*, Mr Gladstone says: 'The poet [Homer] always mentions it [iron] as a rare and valuable substance, used where great hardness was required, and for objects comparatively small and portable.' It is clear also that in Homer's time the art of tempering was well known; with regard to which Professor Roberts-Austen says: 'The knowledge that steel might be hardened must have come to us from remote antiquity. Copper hardened with tin was its only predecessor, and it continued to be used very long after it was known that steel might be hardened. . . . The Greek alchemical manuscripts, which have been so carefully examined by M. Bertholet, give various receipts, from which it is evident that in the early days the nature of the quenching fluid was considered to be all-important. There were certain rivers the waters of which were supposed to be specially efficacious.'

Hesiod, writing a century after Homer, speaks of iron as having been unknown during the age of bronze. Inferentially, it was well known and used in his own time.

A very interesting discovery, made by Dr Schliemann during his researches at Troy, was that of a dagger of steel four inches long, one and six-tenths of an inch wide, with a double-edged and arrow-shaped blade, in a perfect state of preservation. He says of it: 'This is the first object of iron found by me here—nay, until now I had found no trace of iron in any one of the four prehistoric cities, the ruins and débris of which succeed each other here; neither had I found a trace of that metal at Mycenæ.'

Herodotus (484 B.C.) speaks of a colony of Phœnician workers in metal whom Cadmus, an ancient king of Phœnicia, had brought into Greece; but Day's investigations lead him to conclude that it was not introduced into Greece from the Phœnicians, but from Egypt. Aristotle (384 B.C.) says that iron is purified from scoria by melting, and having become sufficiently pure by being thus treated several times, it is changed to steel (*stomōma*). Hence we are led to suppose, says Sir William Siemens, that in Aristotle's time, steel was made by careful selection and treatment of steely iron, which latter was produced by something analogous to the ancient Catalan process of producing iron or steely iron direct from the ore in finery hearths. Aristotle also alludes to the Wootz-steel of India, which in his time and country was well known, and evidently excited interest, as he gives details of the process of its manufacture.

The historian Diodorus Siculus, of the time of Julius and Augustus Cæsar, mentions an ancient method of manufacturing steel swords, in which the iron was buried in the ground and left till rusted, with the result that the blades were so finely tempered as even to cut through a nail without spoiling the edge—in which rather striking assertion, Plutarch, writing in the early years of the Christian era, concurs.

By the time of the first Pliny, an extensive knowledge of steel, its properties and manufacture, evidently prevailed. In his *Historia Naturalis* there are many references to it and its uses. 'By

means of iron and steel we build houses, hew quarries, and cut in stone; yea, and in one word, we use it to all other necessary uses of this life.' 'No kind of iron shall match in goodness the steel that cometh from the Sere [that is, Serica, a geographical designation corresponding in Ptolemy's time to North-west China]. . . . In a second degree of goodness may be placed the Parthian iron; and setting aside these two countries, I know not where there may be any bars or goods tempered of fine steel, indeed; for all the rest have a mixture of iron more or less; and generally in the most parts of the world wherein we live, all our steel is of a more soft and gentle temperature than that of the Levant. The goodness of steel in some countries ariseth from the nature of the mines, as in Austrich; in others from the handling and temperature thereof, as by quenching. . . . The finer any edge-tools be, the manner is to quench them in oil for to harden the edge, for fear lest the water should harden them overmuch, and make the edge more ready to break out into nicks than to bend and turn again.' With a good deal more on the subject. In Pliny, too, occurs the first mention of 'cold-shortness,' from which we assume that the presence of phosphorus in those early days was a source of perplexity to manufacturers. The etymology of the words 'cold-short' and 'red-short' is more intricate and obscure than would at first sight be supposed, and if it could be accurately ascertained, would perhaps throw some light on the experiences of pioneers in the metallurgy of steel. Holland translates Pliny's word for 'cold-short' as 'colsar,' the earliest form of the word with which, as far as we are aware, we are yet acquainted.

Galen (131 A.D.) alludes to knives made from Indian steel (Wootz) as being remarkable for their strength and hardness.

In South Africa the Kafirs have from time immemorial manufactured a kind of steel for their assegais by heating the raw iron ore in contact with charcoal and otherwise treating it. Amongst other tribes, Mungo Park found a simple process in use, his description of which is familiar to all who have read his Travels.

Written records of steel and its uses are but scanty during several early centuries of the Christian era, the only information we have concerning the condition and progress of the metallurgical industry of iron and steel being contained in allusions to various weapons of war among the Britons at the time of the Roman invasion, and the rather extensive employment among the Romans of iron and steel in military accoutrements, hunting-weapons, and implements of domestic use, of which antiquarian research has discovered and preserved many relics.

Towards the later part of the fourteenth century we find records of the importation of steel from Germany, and of the settlement of a colony of German steel-workers in Northumberland, where they carried on a considerable trade and achieved some celebrity. From the fact of its importation we conclude that little or no progress was being made in British steel manufacture during this period.

Mentions of various uses of steel and statutes in reference to it, its importation and home manufacture, increase in frequency throughout

subsequent periods, though we have no account of the industry itself, or any improvement or development, until, in the year 1540, the theory of steel manufacture once again finds a place in the world of letters. Vanoccio Biringuccio, in his *Pyrotechnology*, one of the earliest works on metallurgy extant, published in that year, describes a process which consisted of the retaining of malleable iron for some hours in a bath of fused cast-iron, when it became converted into steel; a theory which in 1556 found corroboration in the *De Re Metallica* of Agricola, who describes the process by an engraving which depicts bars of iron standing upright in a charcoal fire similar to that of a Catalan hearth. After an exposure of several hours to the highly-heated charcoal and carbonic oxide, they became converted into steel.

In 1722 Réaumur produced steel by melting three parts of cast-iron with one part of wrought-iron (probably in a crucible) in a common forge; he, however, failed to produce steel in this manner on a working scale. This process has many points in common with the Indian Wootz-steel manufacture.

To Benjamin Huntsman, a Doncaster artisan, belongs the credit of first producing cast-steel upon a working scale, as he was the first to accomplish the entire fusion of converted bar-iron (that is, blister-steel) of the required degree of hardness, in crucibles or clay pots, placed among the coke of an air-furnace. This process is still carried on at Sheffield and elsewhere, and is what is generally known as the crucible or pot-steel process. It was mainly supplementary to the cementation process, as formerly blister-steel was alone melted in the crucibles; but later, and at the present time, the crucible mode of manufacture embraces the fusion of other varieties and combinations of metal, producing accordingly different classes and qualities of steel.

In 1839, Josiah Marshall Heath patented the important application of carburet of manganese to steel in the crucible, which application imparted to the resulting product the properties of varying temper and increased forgeability. He subsequently found out that a separate operation was not necessary to form the carburet—which is produced by heating peroxide of manganese and carbon to a high temperature—but that the same result could be attained by simply in the first instance adding the carbon and oxide of manganese direct to the metal in the crucible. He unsuspectingly communicated this after-discovery to his agent—by name Unwin—who took advantage of the fact that it was not incorporated in the wording of the patent, and was thus unprotected, to make use of it for his own advantage. The result was one of the most remarkable patent trials on record, extending over twelve years, and terminating in 1855 against the patentee—a memorable instance of the triumph of legal technicalities over the moral sense of right.

It will be seen that the direct result of the processes of ancient and existing use to which we have referred is exclusively 'hard steel,' that is, highly carburised steel, represented chemically by its principal constituent of the metalloid carbon—varying from about six-tenths to one and a

half per cent.—and readily capable of hardening and tempering; with regard to which—hardening and tempering—many amusingly curious theories and practices were in currency among alchemists from time to time throughout the period succeeding the middle ages.

DELAYED AT LAS PALMAS.

CHAPTER II.

IN the evening, after dinner, Preston and I were sitting on the flat roof of the hotel. This was a favourite lounging-place, for there was more air than down in the sheltered garden. There were plenty of basket chairs scattered about, and it was very pleasant to look over the flat roofs and the feathery tops of the palm-trees to the beautiful moonlit sea. It so happened that we had the place to ourselves, and something impelled me to open my heart to my gay, light-hearted friend, who yet seemed to be possessed of great good sense, and who had treated me with rare delicacy and kindness. So I told him all my story, and he listened patiently almost without remark till I had finished. 'Now,' I said in conclusion, 'what do you think I should do? I cannot leave the island till I have tried to justify myself; though I cannot see how I could have acted otherwise under the circumstances.'

'But did she understand the circumstances? that is the question.'

'What do you mean?' I asked, for I had not hinted that I had ever had the smallest suspicion that Mrs Moir had misled me.

'Well, you see, it was just this way, so far as I understand. You had been dangling after the young lady for some time, but had never come to the point. Now, many young fellows have a habit of hanging about a pretty girl with no serious intentions whatever, and with no object beyond a pleasant flirtation; and parents, especially mothers, don't like it. It may be a prejudice on their part, still the fact remains they do not like it.'

'But, my dear fellow,' I was beginning, when Preston waved his hand to enforce silence, and proceeded.

'Well, let us say you were not flirting; but your conduct would bear that interpretation. Then, furthermore, we will suppose that certain inquiries were made, and that it appeared you were not, as regards outward circumstances, in that enviable position which would induce prudent mammas to cultivate your acquaintance with any great enthusiasm. Then a wealthy and more eligible suitor turns up. He is none of your shilly-shallying sort, but makes his meaning clear to the powers that be from the very first; and nothing prevents him from going in and winning except a foolish prejudice on the part of the young lady in favour of the very undesirable young man who will neither speak out nor take himself off. Well, now, you see, from the mother's point of view it would be a very good thing if you could be got rid of; and "all is fair in love and war."

'Then you think that Mrs Moir told me what was not true, simply that she might get rid of me?'

'I think it is very likely; and small blame to

her if she did. I mean no offence, you know; I speak merely as an impartial observer. The old lady no doubt thought she was doing her best for her daughter.'

'Then you would justify falsehood and double-dealing! Your standard of ethics does not seem to be a very high one,' I said stiffly.

'Stop a bit, my dear fellow; you must remember that you were not acting on the square yourself. Any fellow who dangles after a girl month after month and never speaks out honestly, as she and her parents have a right to expect, has very little reason to complain if he is left in the lurch in the end. By your own showing, you did your best to engage the young lady's affections, and then cruelly kept her in doubt and expectation. No sensible mother would allow her daughter to occupy such a humiliating position; nor do fathers as a rule care to hold their daughters so cheap as to ask a young fellow the meaning of his attentions. I think if Mrs Moir practised deceit towards you, it was your own unjustifiable conduct that drove her to it.'

'One would think you held a brief for Mrs Moir, by the way in which you defend her.'

'I don't defend her at all. If she did as we suspect, she inflicted a great injury both on you and on her own daughter. But I want to point out that yours was the first fault, and that Mrs Moir's conduct was a direct consequence of your own.—Don't be cross, old man,' he said, taking out a fresh cigar and preparing to light it. 'If I am to suggest a remedy, we must look the facts fair and square in the face.'

'Then you don't think the case utterly hopeless?'

'No; indeed, I do not. You see, in the first place, she has not married the other fellow, probably because she did not care for him. Then she treats you with marked coldness, which shows she resents your former treatment of her; and I think that unless she had cared for you a little, she would not have troubled herself in the least about meeting you again, and would have laughed over your past experiences.'

There was some comfort in this view of the case, for 'auld love is easy kindled,' as the Scotch say. I was considerably astonished at the shrewdness and worldly wisdom of my light-hearted young friend. I felt the justice of his remarks on my own conduct, and expressed my surprise at hearing such sage sentiments from one of his years.

'I don't go through the world with my eyes shut, and I have sisters,' he said significantly.

'Well,' I said, 'to come to the practical. What would you advise me to do?'

'Hum! It is not so easy to tell,' he said thoughtfully.

'I must have an explanation with her, and how am I to do that if she won't allow me to speak to her?'

'I'll tell you what I would do, if I were you. I would take your cue from her, and since she does not wish to speak to you, avoid her as sedulously as she now avoids you. This will have the effect of making her lay aside her defensive armour; and, then when an opportunity offers, you can be prepared to take advantage of it.'

'I don't know if you have the harmlessness of the dove, Preston, but you certainly are possessed

of the wisdom of the serpent. It is awfully good of you to bother yourself about my affairs, and I will try to follow your advice.'

'I wish you luck,' cried Preston; 'and I hope things may come all right in the end.'

'I don't know,' I answered. 'I am not very sanguine. The first part of your advice can be followed without difficulty. It is easy enough to avoid people in this crowded hotel; but how to get a word with any one in private is more than I can see.'

'Don't be down-hearted, old chap. Chance may favour you, when you least expect it, and if I can help you I will.'

In accordance with the resolution I had come to, I merely bowed to Miss Moir and her aunt when I met them at the breakfast table next morning, and neither then nor later in the day did I make any attempt to speak to her. Attracted by the cool splash of the fountain, I sauntered into the garden in the afternoon with a cigar and a novel. Louie and her aunt with Preston and two or three others were sitting in the shade thrown by a group of palm trees and eucalyptus.

'Come along, Grahame; here is a seat for you,' cried Preston.

'Thanks; I am going to smoke,' I replied, passing on to the other end of the garden.

I could hear their lively chat and merry laughter, and I recognised Louie's voice, the gayest of all. They were planning some excursion for the morrow, and Dick said: 'Perhaps the knight of the rueful countenance may be induced to join us;' and turning towards me, he called out: 'I say, Grahame, are you open for a drive to Telde to-morrow?'

'Are you making up a party?' I asked, going towards them.

'Yes; there are seven of us, and you would make eight—just enough for two conveyances. But don't come if you would rather not. Perhaps you would prefer to stay here and finish your novel,' he said, laughing.

'I shall be very pleased to join you,' I replied, but without any show of eagerness.

When we started on our expedition next morning, I waited till Miss Brown and Miss Moir had seated themselves in the one conveyance, and then I stepped into the other one. After leaving the town, the road led along by the sea-shore for some distance. It was a bright lovely morning, and the sea was of a deep sapphire blue; giant rollers came sweeping majestically in, and dashed in snowy foam against the rocky coast with a deep thundering roar. Then the road ascended; and passing through a tunnel, we drove along the edge of precipitous cliffs, where sea-birds build their nests, and fly screaming and circling above our heads, or dart down to the blue waves below. Far out over the sea, the mountains of Fuerteventura were faintly visible against the clear sky. Then the road takes a sudden turn, and the way lies over beds of scoria and lava, covered with cactus and euphorbia. Past a *caldern*, or extinct volcano, and we come to a small village, of which the whole juvenile population rush out and follow us, calling 'Cuartito, quartitos,' flinging bunches of flowers into the carriages.

The three lean but active ponies which are attached to each conveyance soon leave our ragged

little pursuers far behind, and another turn of the road brings us in sight of the beautiful little town of Telde with its Moorish dome and groups of noble palm-trees—its white flat-roofed houses, half concealed by groves of orange and mango, bananas, peach, and other fruit-trees.

We have lunch at a *fonda*, or Spanish inn. Like all Spanish houses, it is built in a square, enclosing a piece of ground called the *patio*, laid out as a garden. It is shady with palm-trees, gay with flowers, and musical with the fall of waters; and here we desired them to serve our meal. After lunch, we walked down the *barranco* to the famous orange groves, where the rich golden fruit is found in the greatest perfection. We were walking back to Telde up the *barranco*, and Miss Moir, who had fallen a little behind, was botanising. I lingered also, but without speaking or appearing to take any notice of her. Indeed, I had hardly exchanged a word with her all day; and as Preston had foretold, she was less repellent in her manner towards me. She was climbing up the steep side of the *barranco*, or narrow ravine formed by the torrents rushing down from the hills. She was trying to reach some maidenhair fern, when she slipped her foot on one of the loose stones, and would have fallen had I not sprung forward and caught her.

'Those loose stones are not to trust to,' I said. 'I hope you have not hurt your foot?'

'Oh no; I think not. It was only a slight jerk. It was fortunate you were so near, or I might have had a bad fall among these rough stones and prickly cactuses,' she said, looking up at me; adding, 'I am sure I am very much indebted to you.'

'I am glad to have been of some assistance to you. But won't you sit down and rest for a little, till you see if your foot is not injured? and I will go and call the others; they cannot be far ahead.'

'Oh no; it is not necessary to alarm anybody. My foot will be all right presently. I will just take your advice, and rest for a little;' and she seated herself on a huge boulder.

I stood for a minute, thinking now was my chance if I wished to speak to her. I sat down and began, poking away the pebbles with my stick.

'Miss Moir,' I said, 'I was very much surprised, when I met you the other day, to find that you are not married.'

She flushed up, with a look of offence, but did not speak.

'Your mother told me,' I went on, 'that you were to be married to Mr Bremner.'

'My mother told you that!' she exclaimed, in a tone of intense surprise; and then, after a short pause, she asked incredulously: 'When did she say that?'

'Do you remember,' I said, turning to her, 'that evening when I met you at the floral fête? Mr Bremner was with you, and stuck to you like wax, and I could not get a word with you.'

'I remember,' she murmured.

'Well, it was just the next day that it was proposed I should go to the Cape. It was not expected that I should be absent more than a few months; and on my return I was to be taken in as a junior partner. Perhaps you may have

guessed,' I proceeded, 'what hopes I cherished at that time. I thought that you understood; but I did not like to speak to your father till I had a better position to offer you. The promise which had been made to me was just what I had been waiting for, and I resolved to lose no time in telling your parents all about my circumstances and my love for you. I could not leave the country without knowing my fate; and I may as well confess that I was pretty confident of success; but my hopes were soon dashed to the ground. I called that very afternoon and saw your mother; but before I had begun to speak of my own affairs, she told me that she hoped soon to see you married to Mr Bremner.'

'She surely did not tell you that I was engaged to him?'

'No; she did not say that exactly; but I remember her words distinctly enough; they fell upon me like a death-blow;' and I repeated Mrs Moir's remarks verbatim.

Louie did not speak; she only flushed painfully, and began nervously to pluck at a little tuft of flowers which grew beside her.

'I told your mother that I was going to Africa; but, as you may well believe, I could not speak of the hopes her cruel words crushed as ruthlessly as you crush those flowers. I could not trust myself to see you or speak to you; therefore, I did not call again before I left, which was within a week.'

Still Louie said nothing. She sat and plucked at the leaves and stalks near her, for the blossoms were scattered, bruised and broken, at her feet.

'I supposed the marriage had taken place,' I said, 'though I had not heard of it.'

'Mamma told me about your visit,' she said, falteringly and without looking up. 'I never thought you would be so unkind as to leave without seeing me.'

Just then, we heard voices, and soon Miss Brown and Preston appeared coming down the path.

Louie pulled herself together, and called out in a cheerful voice: 'Did you think I was lost, auntie?'

'Well, my child, I was a little alarmed. I thought you might have fallen, or something.'

'I very nearly came to grief. If Mr Grahame had not caught me, I should have tumbled down among those cactuses and rocks.'

'Bless me, child, I hope you are not hurt?'

'Oh no. "Very nearly" never killed a man, you know,' she answered, laughing.

'I am afraid Miss Moir has hurt her foot,' I said.

'Not at all; it was only a slight twist. I can walk well enough now.'

'I suppose you succeeded in having it out with Miss Moir?' said Preston, when the ladies had gone on a bit. 'I exerted all my diplomacy to give you the opportunity; but I could not allay Miss Brown's apprehension a moment longer. I hope we did not spoil sport by returning too soon?'

'Oh no. I said quite enough. I do not think Miss Moir quite believed me at first. I am convinced her mother had wilfully deceived me; and it was no wonder she doubted the truth of what I said. She hardly spoke.'

'Poor girl! She is in a painful dilemma. To believe you was to convict her mother of falsehood.'

'And yet I think she did believe me in the end,' I said in a low voice.

Miss Brown and Mr Preston had struck up a great friendship. He was such a good-natured, obliging sort of fellow; so kindly and courteous in his manners to her, that he had quite won the ancient spinster's heart. They had arranged a drive to San Mateo. 'It was so much better,' she said, 'to have the company of gentlemen, especially in the more distant excursions. Ladies are so dreadfully victimised, when there is nobody to protect them. The beggars alone are nearly too much for me.' Miss Brown was not of the strong-minded order of women.

Our route was in the opposite direction to that of the preceding day, and was more inland. The roads were mostly shaded by tamarisk, eucalyptus, and pepper trees. We passed vine-clad slopes, orange groves, palms, and sugar-canes. We travelled in the usual four-wheeled conveyance drawn by three ponies, and went swinging along at a great rate, though the way was nearly all up-hill. We never stopped till we reached the half-way house, where we rested for a little, and drank a glass of the muscatel wine for which the district is famous. On reaching San Mateo, we walked up to a waterfall to which we had been directed.

We were followed by about half-a-dozen small boys, most of whom wore only a tattered shirt. One or two had a ragged nondescript garment over the shirt; but the weather was warm, and they seemed comfortable. Two of the boys had been engaged by the driver to carry the luncheon-baskets with which we had been supplied from the hotel; and the others, having no other occupation on hand, had followed to see what was doing, and perhaps receive a share of anything that might be going. We tried to drive the supernumeraries away; but it was no use. They would stop for a minute when we had made ourselves quite hot with threatening pantomime, and the minute we turned away, they followed up as persistently as ever.

We soon arrived at the spot indicated, and the baskets were placed under a tree. The boys seated themselves close beside them, manifesting a great interest in the contents, having evidently invited themselves to luncheon; but as our would-be guests were neither clean nor savoury, we made them take up a position at some distance, where they sat and watched our every motion. One queer little chap with a solemn wizened face, which might have belonged to an old man more than to a child, attracted our notice. He was the smallest of the party, and wore a little cotton shirt and a waistcoat, or rather a garment which might have been a waistcoat, but was now only a varied assortment of holes, held in precarious unity by a shred or two of rag. This curious little oddity produced from some receptacle in his upper garment a small pinch of tobacco and a withered leaf. These he rolled into a cigarette; and producing a match, he lighted it and puffed away with evident enjoyment.

When we had finished, we waved the expectant youngsters forward to finish the good things;

but as their pell-mell rush showed there was likely to be a regular scrimmage over the baskets, we made them all sit down again, while we apportioned the viands in equal shares. Half a bottle of thin Canary wine was divided in the same impartial manner.

After lunch, we proposed to climb a little higher up the stream for the sake of the view; and it was not long ere my wily friend Dick had led the vigilant duenna off the track, and left Louie and me by ourselves, except for the ragged escort who persisted in keeping close at our heels. We sat down for a while to enjoy the lovely scenery, and our youthful bodyguard squatted down in a semicircle in front of us, evidently bent on studying the manners and customs of the strangers.

We had been silent for a while, and then Louie said: 'Mr Grahame, I think it right to tell you that I was not engaged to Mr Bremner; but what my mother told you was true in a way, for she was very anxious I should accept him.'

'And what did you?—I mean, were you?'—

'I did not care for him, and I refused him, though my mother was much displeased, for she had a very high opinion of Mr Bremner.'

I turned to her, and took her hand, saying: 'Tell me, Louie, have I for ever forfeited all hope of calling you mine?'

Her answer need not be recorded, but it was eminently satisfactory.

All this time the small students of human nature were gazing in round-eyed astonishment at beholding certain demonstrations which are seldom performed before an audience except in the theatre. The love-scenes on the stage are often rather trying to the spectators; but our audience appeared to be hugely delighted; they clapped their hands, and would have cheered if they had known how. They followed us back to the town; and when we drove off, after a liberal distribution of cuartitos, we left them as happy a set of tatterdemalions as were to be found on the island.

When I met Dick on our way back, he gave me an inquiring look.

'All right,' I said.

'I am uncommonly glad to hear it,' he replied.

But no further remark was made, for we quite understood that Louie would need to break the news gently to her aunt.

She was rather put about, poor old soul, for, as she said, she was responsible to Mr and Mrs Moir.

The two ladies intended to leave for home in another week, and we decided to let the *Coomassie*, which was now ready to put to sea, sail without us, and to accompany them on the homeward voyage. We spent the intervening days very pleasantly, visiting the Guanche caves, the Grand Caldera, and the various sights in the island.

We sailed for home on the appointed day in splendid weather, and had a delightful voyage till we entered the English Channel, when a dense fog enveloped us. The engines were slowed, and frequent soundings were taken. Two young fellows on board, who had been on a pleasure trip, were in what Mr Bunyan would have called 'doleful dumps,' because they had set their hearts on being in Liverpool in time for the 'Grand National' steeplechase, and the fog was likely

to destroy all chance of it. For my part I did not care how long the fog lasted, were it not for the risk of being run into. I felt that all my world was on board the steamer, and I knew not what might happen when we reached London. Louie was quite confident that her parents would give their consent to our engagement, but I myself could not help feeling rather apprehensive.

In the evening, a great cheer got up, and the young fellows came rushing down to tell us that Carnarvon Bay light was seen, that the fog was clearing, and we should 'do it yet.' The fog-horn was kept sounding out its warning for the most part of the night. Holyhead light is passed, and the deep-toned bell is heard from the shore. In the morning we are in the Mersey. The pilot has come on board. The sporting men are in the wildest excitement. 'We shall do it,' they cry; 'we shall do it!'

At last we are in. The sporting men settle with the Custom-house officers for some cigars, and are first ashore. The last we saw of them, they were waving their hats to us as they drove off in good time for the great event. We followed more leisurely, and in due time were dashing along in the London express.

Mr and Mrs Moir were both on the platform when we arrived in town. There was a little constraint in Mrs Moir's manner towards me; but she expressed her thanks for my attention to the travellers. Mr Moir shook me warmly by the hand, and hoped they would soon have the pleasure of seeing me at Clapham Park.

I called the following afternoon; and with the full consent of all concerned I was allowed to place on Louie's finger the half-hoop of diamonds I had brought with me; and in a few months I expect that a plain golden circlet will keep it company.

CLERKENWELL AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS.

'Sir,' said Dr Johnson to Boswell on one occasion as they emerged from Bolt Court into Fleet Street—'talk of prospects, sir! This is the most sublime and picturesque combination of objects within the periphery of our terraqueous ball.' A similar tribute of praise could not certainly be paid to Clerkenwell in the present day; and yet the prospect from the Well of the Clerks in early times must have been very charming, situated as it was on the skirts of the forest of Middlesex, while all around were gently-sloping hills, and limpid streams, fed by the many springs for which the neighbourhood was renowned. A writer of the time of Henry II. mentions among the excellent springs round London on the north, Clerkenwell, Holywell, and St Clement's Well, as being of most note; and most frequently visited, 'as well by the scholars from the schools as by the youth of the city when they go out to take air in the summer evenings.' At this time, too, it possessed 'fields for pasture, and a delightful plain of meadow-land, interspersed with flowing streams, on which stand mills whose clack is very pleasing to the ear.'

Once a year at least, the parish clerks of London assembled here 'to play some large history of Holy Scripture'—during the fourteenth century, when miracle plays were part of the religious life of the nation. In course of time, wrestling-matches and other feats of strength were added to the attractions of Clerkenwell, and continued to draw large audiences in the days when miracle plays were a thing of the past.

Few things are more curious in the history of London than the freaks of fashion with regard to locality. The dreary and commonplace aspect of the dingy brick houses, mostly built at the close of the last century, which characterises the clock-making neighbourhood of to-day, makes it difficult to realise that the vicinity of the Well of the Clerks was still a village in the reign of Elizabeth, but fast becoming a favourite spot for the suburban residences of the noble and wealthy classes. The names of the streets and courts still keep the legend alive, although fashion has long since deserted Clerkenwell, as it has deserted Bloomsbury and Soho. Yet in St John's Square in 1661 lived Charles Howard, first Earl of Carlisle, one of the governors of Jamaica. Here, too, lived about the same period the Earl of Essex, at one time Viceroy of Ireland. Suspected of complicity in the Rye House Plot, he was confined in the Tower, where he died by his own hand. Lord Townshend, one of the five Commons deputed by Parliament to go to Holland to beg the return of Charles II. to his loving subjects, had a house here; and on the west side of the square Bishop Burnet, the celebrated author of the *History of his own Time*, passed some portion of his life, and lies buried in the parish church of St James. His life was passed in the midst of stirring times, and was of a most eventful character. Born in Edinburgh in the year 1643, during his long career he experienced every vicissitude of fortune. At one time we find him in France, sharing the fate of exile with Algernon Sidney and Fletcher of Salton, being well received by Louis XIV., and counting among his friends such men as Condé and the eloquent Bourdaloue and Père La Chaise. Again, when no longer a *persona grata* in France, he retired to the Hague, and there enjoyed the favour of William of Orange. He was one of those who landed with that Prince at Tor Bay; and when William was established on the English throne, was finally rewarded with the Bishopric of Salisbury.

Clerkenwell Close reminds us of that gentle knight, Sir Thomas Challoner, who, like Burnet, passed an eventful life, and died in the house he had built himself at Clerkenwell. As a diplomatist, he had been on an embassy to the court of Charles V., had accompanied that emperor to Algiers, and nearly lost his life on the coast of Barbary in 1541. A few years later, he fought at Pinkie (near Musselburgh), and received the honour of knighthood on the field of battle.

Newcastle Place is built on the site of the suburban residence of the Dukes of Newcastle. Of this family the most celebrated was the William Cavendish who enjoyed the favour of James I., and followed the fortunes of his son. After the battle of Marston Moor, he left England and spent eighteen years in exile on the Continent, living while at Antwerp in a house owned by the widow of Rubens. His wife, Margaret, was of a literary turn of mind, and something of a blue-stocking. Even her husband forgot his usual reverence for her erudition on one occasion when he said to some friend who was extolling his wife's learning: 'Sir, a very wise woman is a very foolish thing.' She was wont to be surrounded by a bevy of damsels, whose business was to write down her passing thoughts by day; and if a sudden inspiration seized her at night, her luckless footman, 'John,' was pressed into the service. Two lines from her works will give an idea of her curious conceits in the way of metaphor. She thinks

Life scums the cream of beauty with Time's spoon,
And draws the claret wine of blushes soon.

Her memory is immortalised for us in the pages of *Peveril of the Peak*.

Few places in the metropolis are so haunted with memories of the past as the site of the Priory of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem. The famous old gateway still frowns down on us—the sole relic of the mediæval grandeur of the home of the Hospitallers. With their history we are not now concerned. But the Gate of St John has other associations. From here, Edmund Tylney licensed as many as thirty of Shakespeare's plays. Here, in later days, Edward Cave set up as a printer and started the *Gentleman's Magazine* on its prosperous career. At the Gate, Dr Johnson was a frequent visitor, and here, we are told, when strangers called, he ate his plate of victuals behind a screen, sensitive of the ridicule his shabby clothes might entail upon him. Here, one is glad to say, the genius of the rough but ever kind-hearted philosopher found eventual recognition. In a room over the gateway, Garrick made his début as an actor in an amateur performance of Fielding's *Mock Doctor*, his fellow-actors being Cave's journeymen.

A celebrity of the last century lived in Aylesbury Street, Clerkenwell; this was Thomas Britton, the 'musical small-coal man.' Born in Northamptonshire about the middle of the seventeenth century, he became apprenticed to a vendor of small-coal in St John Street, Clerkenwell. In 1677 we find him master of a stable with two stories, the lower of which he used as a coal-shop, while the upper formed a long low room, to which access was gained by a ladder-like staircase from the outside. In 1678 he here established his musical club, which continued to meet on Thursdays for nearly forty years. Up the rickety stairs the beautiful Duchess of Queensberry was not ashamed to climb to hear the first violin players of the day perform, or listen to Handel bringing forth matchless music from the organ. The admission to the concerts seems to have been at first free; but afterwards the subscription to the club was ten shillings a year, and the members were regaled with coffee 'at a penny the dish.' Not only learned in coals and music,

Britton dabbled in chemistry and alchemy, and had a fine taste in books. Noble book-hunters, and seekers after rare editions, such as Harley, Earl of Oxford, Lord Pembroke, and the Duke of Devonshire, either came to his house in Clerkenwell or met together at Christopher Bateman's, in Paternoster Row—Britton still wearing his blue smock, and with the coal-sack which he had been carrying about the streets all the day, over his shoulder. He continued, in spite of his musical and literary tastes, to sell small-coal until his death.

The names of Great Bath Street, Cold-Bath Square, Spa Fields, and the like, remind us of the days when drinking the waters was so much in vogue. In 1697 a spring was discovered in Cold-Bath Square by a certain Walter Baynes, and was made by him into a source of considerable profit. A bath-house was erected, which was open from five o'clock in the morning until one in the afternoon. The charge was two shillings; but by payment of sixpence extra, persons in feeble health might use a chair, which was suspended from the ceiling in such a manner that it could be lowered into the water and drawn up again. In this square, at a later date, lived poor Eustace Budgell, the friend of Addison, who sought a melancholy death in the Thames, his mind being partially unhinged by the worry of litigation and by losses in the South Sea speculation. He left a paper on his desk with the words, 'What Cato did and Addison approved cannot be wrong.'

Taking the waters then, as now, was attended by a good deal of merry-making and amusement. The proprietor of a place of entertainment 'near the New Wells by the London Spaw,' in 1745 added an amusing note to his programme of attractions: 'The proprietor being informed that it is a general complaint against others who offer like entertainment that if the gentle zephyrs blow ever so little the company are in danger of having their viands fanned away through the thinness of their consistency, promises that *his* shall be of such solidity as to resist the air'—referring, doubtless, to the proverbial thinness of a 'Vauxhall slice.'

Other famous places of resort in the neighbourhood were Sadler's Wells and Bagnigge Wells. Nell Gwynne had once a summer residence at Bagnigge Wells House. About the year 1680 it became a place of entertainment. Nearly a century afterwards, a mineral spring was discovered, and for many years Bagnigge Wells enjoyed great popularity. About 1775 we learn that one of the characteristics of 'bon ton' was

Drinking tea on summer afternoons
At Bagnigge Wells with china and gilt spoons.

Miss Edgeworth in one of her Tales also alludes to this spot—

The City to Bagnigge Wells repair
To swallow dust, and call it air.

Bull and bear baiting, cock-fighting, and similar amusements, attracted large audiences during the early years of the last century to a spot in Clerkenwell bearing the ill-sounding name of Hockley-in-the-Hole. A handbill for the year 1710 will give some idea of the kind of entertainment

which was provided: 'At the Bear Garden in Hockley-in-the-Hole.—This is to give notice to all gentlemen gamesters and others that on the present Monday is a match to be fought by two Dogs, one from Newgate Market against one from Honey Lane Market, at a Bull for a guinea to be spent. Likewise a green Bull to be baited which was never baited before, and a Bull to be turned loose with Fireworks all over him. Beginning exactly at three of the clock.' These sports caused considerable scandal to the more respectable inhabitants of Clerkenwell, and frequent endeavours were made to put a stop to them, but without much avail. The spread of education and the gradual softening of manners proved the only real remedy.

Strong men, then, as now, created a considerable amount of interest. One of these celebrities, Topham by name, lived in Bath Street in 1741. One of his feats was that of lifting three hog-heads of water, weighing over eighteen hundred pounds; and a story is told of him that one night, finding a watchman asleep in his box, he raised both from the ground and dropped them over the wall of Bunhill Fields burying-ground!

Clerkenwell is especially the home of the clock and watch making industry. In the early years of the last century many persons employed in these trades took up their abode there. The celebrated painter, Charles Robert Leslie, was the son of a clockmaker living in Clerkenwell; and in 1721, Christopher Pinchbeck resided in Albion Place, where he invented his astronomico-musical clocks. In a house at one time tenanted by the father of John Wilkes, lived Colonel Magniac, who employed himself in making automaton clocks for the Emperor of China.

There is no loneliness so complete as that experienced by a stranger in a large city, and to those who wish to be let alone by their fellow-creatures, the great world of London offers more attractions than the country. Misers and eccentric persons of all descriptions have always, therefore, been found in the metropolis in considerable numbers, and in no part of it, perhaps, more than in Clerkenwell. Here lived the eccentric centenarian, Mrs or 'Lady' Lewson, who for many years before her death (1816) had always appeared dressed in the garb of a century previous, when 'Life was hers, and hope was young.' Another eccentric character was the miser Cooke, who was wont to ask persons he called on to put a little ink in the bottle he always carried about with him. He used generally to add that he had no objection if they filled it! At his death, he left a very large fortune. A curious case of mental aberration produced by the pride of place and riches was that of Elizabeth, Duchess of Albemarle, who lived at Newcastle House, Clerkenwell. After her husband's death in 1698, she resolved never again to give her hand to any but a sovereign Prince. She accordingly rejected all her suitors until Ralph, Duke of Montague, won her hand, coming disguised as the Emperor of China!

Did space permit, mention might be made of many other worthies in Clerkenwell's roll of fame. As it is, a few notes on the historic Red Bull Theatre must suffice. On the site of Wood-bridge Street, the old Red Bull was a famous

theatre in the time of Shakespeare, though we have few details of the performances there. Edward Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich College, once trod its boards. Its fortunes underwent many vicissitudes in the times of the Puritans; but at the Restoration, the King's Players acted here for some time until they removed to their new theatre in Vere Street, Clare Market. Pepys did not think much of the management of the theatre at this period, for in his 'Diary' for the 23d of March 1662, he says: 'To the Red Bull, where I had not been since the plays came up again. Up to the tiring-room, where strange the confusion and disorder that is among them in fitting themselves, especially here, where the clothes are very poore and the actors but common fellows.' He goes on to say the house was anything but full, and the play badly acted; and he tells us that a boy that was to sing a song, not singing it right, 'his master fell about his eares and beat him so that it put the whole house in an uproar.' 'The Red Bull,' says Sir William Davenant in 1663, 'stands open for fencers, for there are no tenants in it but spiders!' Such was the end of the old Red Bull Theatre, which, like the 'Globe,' had 'seen its day,' and outlasted the golden age of the English drama.

PUSSY'S NOTABLE FRIENDS.

FOLLOWING in the wake of Buffon, writers of Natural Histories are pretty unanimous in setting down the cat as an animal incapable of personal attachment; yet Puss has contrived to win the friendship and affection of many notable men. The skull of Morosini's favourite cat is still preserved among the relics of that Venetian worthy. The counterfeit presentment of Andrea Doria's huge spotted pet contemplates the Doge with mournful tenderness on the canvas, as he was wont to do when both were in the flesh. Sir Henry Wyatt's gratitude to the feline friend who saved him from starving in the Tower by bringing pigeons for his sustenance, caused him ever afterwards to make much of his purveyor's kindred, and we are told, 'you shall not find his picture anywhere, but, like Sir Christopher Hatton with his dog, with a cat beside him.'

Having exhausted his credit with the candle-dealers, Tasso besought his cat to aid him with the light of her lustrous eyes. Cowper commemorated his sedate favourite being shut up in a drawer; gloried in saving her becoming the victim of her philosophical inquiry into the nature of a viper, by decapitating the intruder with a handy hoe; and thought Lady Hesketh could not withstand an invitation to come and see a tortoiseshell kitten given to indescribable gambols, 'the drollest of creatures that ever wore a catskin,' ere Time, that spoiled all things, turned her into a cat. When Horace Walpole bewailed to Gray the loss of his handsomest cat, the poet condolingly replied: 'I know Zara and Selima, or, rather, I knew them both together, for I cannot justly say which was which. Then as to your handsomest cat, I am no less at a loss, as well knowing one's handsomest cat is always the cat one likes best; or if one be alive and the other dead, it is usually the latter that is handsomest. Besides, if the

point were never so clear, I hope you do not think me so ill-bred as to forget my interest in the survivor. Oh no! I would rather seem to mistake, and imagine to be sure that it must be the tabby one.' It was the tabby one; and in the hope of immortalising Mademoiselle Selima, Gray sent Walpole an ode recording how Selima, tumbling from a 'lofty vase's side' into a tub of gold-fish—

Eight times emerging from the flood,
She mewed to ev'ry wat'ry god
Some speedy aid to send.
No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirred;
Nor cruel Tom nor Susan heard.
A fav'rite has no friend!

Upon Gray's death, Walpole memorialised poet and puss together by placing Selima's vase upon a pedestal inscribed with the opening stanza of the ode.

Advising Miss Susannah Thrale to read Bickerstaffe's account of his cat, Dr Johnson wrote: 'I could tell you as good things of Lily, the white kitling, who is now in full growth and very well behaved.' Speaking to Langton of the desperate state of a young scapegrace of good family who was running about town shooting cats, the Doctor muttered: 'But Hodge shall not be shot; no, no, Hodge shall not be shot!' Hodge was the cat for whose delectation he fetched oysters. Seeing the favoured creature scrambling up his master's breast, while, half whistling, the smiling Doctor rubbed its back and pulled its tail, Boswell, smothering his antipathy to the feline race for the nonce, remarked that Hodge was a fine cat. 'Why, yes, sir,' replied Johnson; 'but I have had cats whom I liked better than this,' adding, as if he feared Hodge might be offended, 'but he is a fine cat, a very fine cat indeed!' Equally considerate of his cat's feelings was Sterne. Writing from Coxwold to his well-loved daughter, he tells her: 'As to my pleasures they are few in compass. My poor cat sits purring beside me. Your lively French dog shall have his place on the other side of my fireside; but if he is as devilish as when I last saw him, I must tutor him, for I will not have my cat abused.'

Scott's love of dogs did not prevent his delighting in the company of 'a conversable cat,' like the big gray puss who was almost as important a member of the Abbotsford household as Maida herself. His grave interested demeanour when listening to his master reading the old romance of Arthur to Washington Irving, impelled his fellow-auditor to observe that he evidently had a taste for black-letter literature. 'Ah,' said Sir Walter, 'these cats are a very mysterious kind of folk; there is always more passing in their minds than we are aware of: it comes, no doubt, from their being so familiar with warlocks and witches.' Then he told the story of the guidman who told his guildwife that he had met a funeral procession of cats on his way home; whereupon the family cat exclaimed, 'Then I am king of the cats!' and vanished up the chimney. 'Our grimalkin here,' added Scott, 'reminds me of the story by the airs of sovereignty he assumes; and I am apt to treat him with respect from the idea that he may be a great prince incog., and some time or other come to the throne.'

Bentham did not dream of his feline companion attaining quite so high a dignity. On his first

coming he had christened him Langbourne; but as he developed in width and wisdom, the philosopher dubbed him, 'Sir John Langbourne'; and when advanced years brought increased gravity, inducted him into the Church, to die in full possession of all his faculties and be mourned as the 'Rev. Sir John Langbourne, D.D.' Josh. Billings resented the suggestion that 'William' was too dignified an appellation for his favourite, and insisted that such a special blue-blooded specimen of the feline critter deserved a dignified name, adding: 'Poor old man! he has had fits recently; and now I call him Fitzwilliam!'

When Pius IX. sat down to dine, his cat came in with the soup, mounted a chair opposite him, and dumbly and decorously looked on until the Pontiff had finished his meal. Then it received its own at its master's hands, and took leave till the same hour the next day. The demise of puss alarmed the Pope's household, lest he should be painfully affected by the loss of his old table companion; but His Holiness 'did not seem to care a bit more about it than he had cared for the death of his Secretary, the Cardinal Antonelli.' A much more pronounced cat-lover was the Abbé Galiani, who declared his life at Naples would have been unbearably dull but for the companionship of his two cats, of such value in his eyes, that losing one through a servant's negligence, the Abbé made a clean sweep of his household, vowing he should hang himself in despair if the lost one were not recovered, which, fortunately, came about in time to avert such a catastrophe. Lamenting the passing away of his friend the Archbishop of Taranto, Sir Henry Holland says: 'His cat and the Archbishop, sitting together as they generally did, made a picture of themselves, the former looking the more austere theologian of the two.' A friend visiting Bishop Thirlwall in his retirement, thinking he looked uncomfortable and weary, asked why he did not sit in the easy-chair. 'Don't you see who is there?' was the reply of the Bishop, as he pointed to a big cat fast asleep on the cushion. 'She must not be disturbed.' The great Churchman preferred his cat's comfort to his own, like Mohammed, who cut off the sleeve of his robe rather than interfere with the repose of his beloved Muezza.

Razzi the painter's Angora cats shared his affection with a troop of squirrels, monkeys, goats, and asses. Mind, the 'Raphael of cats,' loved cats only, and did not care how many he had about him. His special pet was always at his side when he worked, to be talked to and answer in cat language. When an epidemic of madness broke out among the feline population of Berne, the police killed every cat they could find; but Mind contrived to hide his pet until all danger was past. While rejoicing at her escape, he never forgot or forgave the massacring of his favourite animals, for his love extended to the whole race. That apparently was the case with Harlequin Rich, for when pretty Peg Woffington succeeded in obtaining audience with him, she found Rich lolling on a sofa, with a cup of tea in one hand, a playbook in the other, and seven-and-twenty cats of all ages, sizes, and colours bearing him company; some on the floor, some on his knees, some perched on his arms, others on his shoulders, and one cleverly balanced on his head.

Although it was a Frenchman who declared a

love of cats to be a vice of inferior minds, and that no man of taste ever could have any sympathy with a beast passionately fond of asparagus, our neighbours have taken kindly to puss. If he did not particularly care for cats, Richelieu delighted in kittens, and Colbert shared his fancy. Chateaubriand loved the cat for its independent spirit; and when he lodged with Widow O'Leary in London, he mourned with his landlady on her losing two lovely cats, as white as ermine, with black tips to their tails; and he always blessed his embassy to Rome, because Leo XIII. then made him the proud possessor of Micetti, a big grayish-red cat, which he loved and cherished to the end of its existence. Victor Hugo kept a warm corner in his heart for his lazy Chanoine. Paul de Kock's Frontin was a beloved home companion for eleven years. Montaigne thought out his essays while stroking his tabby's fur. No one in St Beuve's establishment dared touch his writing-table, but his cat was privileged to do as he willed amid its piles of papers. Beaudelaire could not see a cat in the street but he must coax it to come to his arms; and visiting a house for the first time, he was not happy until he made the acquaintance of the cat pertaining to it.

Lover of all things fair, Theophile Gautier had a passion for cats, born in boyhood, when his gray cat used to bite Madame Gautier's legs whenever she took her son to task. No gift was so acceptable to Gautier as a cat; but he was fairly alarmed when he received a white Angora, 'a veritable Apollo.' He said he should not dare to offer it anything but white mice. His cats were given grand names—Zobeide, Zuleima, Zuleika, Cleopatra, Zi-zi, were some of them. Childebrand was a splendid tawny, black-striped specimen. A red-coated, white-breasted, pink-nosed, blue-eyed beauty was named Madame Theophile because she walked with him in the garden, reposed on his arm indoors, and slept at the foot of his bed. She had a weakness for patchouli, and delighted in hearing her master's lady-friends sing; but invariably closed their mouths with her paw if they attempted a note too high for them. Another of his special pets was a white cat, named Don Pedro de Navarre, a cat much interested in his owner's pursuits, who would turn over the leaves of a book and then fall asleep, 'for all the world as if he had been reading a fashionable novel.' The Don never retired to rest till Gautier came home, meeting him at the door, and preceding him to his bedroom. As soon as he was between the sheets, up jumped the Don, took Gautier's neck between his paws, rubbed noses while uttering little cries of affection, and then perched himself on the bedhead and slept like a bird on a branch. He was provided with a spouse in the dreamy, contemplative, snowy Seraphitas; but the pair died all too soon, and the White Dynasty was succeeded by the Black Dynasty—three black beauties, the offspring of the white pair. They bore the names of Enjolras, Gavroche, and Epinone. The first named was a magnificent cat of slow and majestic movements; Gavroche was of Bohemian temperament, fond of low company, and given to the amiable weakness of inviting starved strays to partake of the good things provided for himself. Epinone was a perfect lady, who received visitors, conducted

them up-stairs, and amused them till Gautier relieved her, when she retired to the corner of the piano, and listened to the conversation without interrupting it. She took her seat at table, and went regularly through the dinner from soup to dessert; but if she found knife, fork, and spoon laid in her place, Epinone betook herself to the piano and quietly looked on. Naturally, this model cat lived beloved and died lamented. Gautier's artist cronies were fond of caricaturing him and his pets; but he told them cats were quite beyond their pencils: they might draw men and women—mere talent sufficed for that—but to portray a cat required genius.

Chesterfield provided for his cat by will; and Sir George Bowyer desired the inheritors of his property to protect his church and convent at Abingdon, hoped they would remember his poor people, and expected them to take care of his cat. Even that utter scoundrel, Thomas Griffiths Wainwright, loved his cat, and we may take it for granted the attachment was reciprocated—his pet being the exception proving the rule laid down by Oliver Maddox Browne, that it is an impossibility for a cat to form an enthusiastic friendship with a person of utterly vitiated and unprincipled morals.

BIRD-MUSIC.

Oh, sweet the thrush's song
From the tall lime's retreat;
No sound of flute or human voice
Was ever half so sweet.

What means that wondrous note?
I sit and ponder long.
All Nature's varying moods and life
Seem uttered in the song:

The thoughts of grass and flower;
The scents of new-mown hay;
The mystic murmur of the winds
Which 'mid the branches play;

The words of the green leaf;
The odour of the air;
The gleaming of the evening dew;
The love of all things fair;

The soft laugh of a child;
The cry of heart that bleeds;
The shadow of a summer cloud
Upon the summer meads;

The rifts of soft sunshine;
The sweet rush of the rain;
The colour of the daffodil—
They all seem in that strain.

Oh, wondrous burst of song!
Its central note is Love,
And all sweet fancies of the soul
Around it seem to move.

WILLIAM COWAN.

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